THE POORE Doubting CHRISTIAN Drawn to CHRIST.

Wherein the main Lets and Hinderances which keep men from coming to CHRIST are discovered.

With speciall Helps to recover Gods favour.

Ho. every one that thirsteth, drink of the waters of life, and he that hath no money, come buy and eat freely.

The sixth Edition.

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THE POORE DOUBTING CHRISTIAN drawne unto Christ.

JOHN 6.45.

Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

THere are divers lets and impediments which hinder poor Christians from

coming unto CHRIST, all which I desire to reduce to these following heads.

First, such hinderances as really keep men from coming to take hold of Christ at all, which are briefly these:

Lets which hinder men from coming to Christ.

1. Blinde carelesnesse, or presumptuous security, whereby men content themselves in their present condition, presuming al is wel with them, when there is no such matter.

2. Being convinced of this, they bethink how to save themselves by their own strength, & therupon set upon a reformation of life, thinking to make God amends by reforming some

some sins which they hear themselves reproved of by the Ministers.

3. The sinner being convinced of his utter inability to please God in himself, at length gets up a staire higher, and sees all his performances & prayers, and duties to be of no power in themselves, but that he must leave all, and cleave onely unto *Christ* by faith; & this he thinks he can do well enough, and so thrusts himself upon *Christ*, thinking all the work is then done, and no more to be looked after.

4. If he sees this fails him too, then he goes yet further, and confesseth he

cannot come to *Christ*, except *Christ* give him his hand, and help him up: therefore now he will attend upon the ordinances, and labour and bestirre himself hard in the use of all good means, conceiving thereby to hammer out at last, a *faith* of his own to make him happy. And here he rests, hanging as it were upon the out side of the Ark, so long, till at last the waves and winds growing fierce and violent; he is beaten off from his hold, and so sinks for ever.

Besides these, there are other kinds of hinderāces which do not indeed deprive a man of title and interest

intereſt to eternall happineſſe, but make the way tedious & uncomfortable, ſo that he cannot come to Chriſt ſo readily as he deſires and longs to do; the ground whereof is this, when men out of carnall reaſon contrive another way to come unto Chriſt than ever he ordained or revealed, when we ſet up a ſtandard by Gods Standard, and out of our own imagination make another condition of beleeving than ever *Chriſt* required or ordained. Thus we make barres in the way, and manacle our hands, & fetter our feet, and then we complain we cannot go: thus it is with you

poor Christians, and the fault is your own. Now amongst many there be three hinderances which are chiefly to be observed, by which many gracious hearts are marvellously hindred from coming to, and from receaving that comfort from *Christ*, which they might, and hee is willing to bestow.

Three main hinderances which keep men from *Christ*.

1. First, the distressed soul being happily truly humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holinesse, and the Image of God stampt upon the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which *God* hath made to all that are his: Now the soul seeing these

these, begins thus to reason with himself, and saith, Surely if I were so holy & so gracious, then I might have hope to receave the pardon of my sinnes; for were my heart so inlarged to duties, and could my heart be so carryed with power against my corruptions to master them, then there were some hope; but when I have no power against sin, nor any heart to seek so importunately for a *Christ*, how dare I think that any mercy belongs to me, having so many wants? thus they dare not come to the promise, and they will not venture upon it, because they have not that inlarge-

ment to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the Saints of God have.

But we must know this doth not hinder, we make it a hinderance, when in truth it is none; for observe it, we must not think to bring enlargement and hope to the promise, but we must go to the promise for them; hope must be stirred, & desire quickned, and love & joy kindled by the promise; who made this a condition of the Covenant, that a man must have so much enlargment before he come to the promise? our Saviour requires no portion, but meer poverty and empti-

emptineſſe : if thou haſt nothing, he wil have thee, provided that thou wilt have him ; *The rich he ſends empty away*, but the poor is ſatisfied, and the thirſty refreſhed, there is nothing required on our ſide, but onely to receive him as a husband : *Buy without money*, ſaith the Text ; you muſt not think to come and buy a husband ; the Lord looks for no power or ſufficiēce of our ſelves, no power againſt corruption, nor enlargement to duties; if you will be content that *Chriſt* ſhall take all from you, and diſpoſe of you, then, take a *Saviour*, and have him.

Luk. 1. 35.

Eſa. 55. 1.

But the poore ſoule ſaith, *Queſt.*

saith, if I go thus hudwinked, how shall I know that I do not presume, and how shal I know that I have a true title to the promise?

Answ. I answer, there is no better argument in the world that thou hast an interest in *Christ*, than this, thy taking of the Lord *Christ* as a *Saviour* wholly, and as a husband, *Iohn* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to him he gave power to be the Sonnes of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* He doth not say, to as many as had such enlargement in duties, and such power against corruptions; but if thou wilt take *Christ* upon those tearms

tearms which he offers himself, there is no better argument under heaven, that thou hast a title to the promise. There is a desperate despair that often seizeth upon the hearts of distressed sinners.

Therefore in the second place, as the sinner looks upon the excellency of *Christ*, and grace, and his own insufficiency, and so will not venture upon the promise, so he looks upon his own sinfulnesse and worthinesse; and therefore dares not venture upon mercy; he views the number of his sins so many and vile, and the continuance of them so long, and he seeth the floods of abomi- 2

abominations coming in amain upon his soul, and Satan helps him forwards hereto; for this is the policy of the Devill, that, if he can, he wil make a man that he shall never see his sin, but say, there is mercy enough in a *Saviour*, and therefore I may live as I list; but when the sinner will needs see his sin, then he will let him see nothing but sin; the one that he may presume, and the other that he may despair.

Now the poor sinner staies here, tell him of the mercy of God, and of the plentious redemption in *Christ*, and of the riches of the freenesse of Gods grace,

grace, what, saith he, should I think that there is any mercy for me, and that I have any interest in *Christ?* that were strange. And thus the soul is here poring, and fastened, and setled upon his corruption, and is ever stirring the wound, and never goes to the Physitian: For a man is as well kept from looking to *Christ* by despair, as by presumption; before he sees his sin, he thinks his condition is good, and he hath a sufficiency of his own, and needs not go to *Christ*; and when he sees his sinne, then he beholds so much vileness in himself, that he dares not go to *Christ*, lest when he

he goes before him, he send him down to the pit. Herein the Devill is very subtill; but this doth not hinder our title to *Christ*, neither ought it to discourage our hearts from laying hold on salvation.

For first, (observe it) for whom did *Christ* come into the world, & for whom did he die when he was come? it was not for the *righteous*, that needed him not, but for the *poor sinner* that condemnes himself, and knows he cannot save himself. *Paul* saith, *Christ Iesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief*: and *Zach.* 13. 1. *There is a fountaine opened for sinne, and*

1 Tim. 1. 13.

for

for uncleanneſſe, that is, for all ſorts of ſinnes, and for all kind of ſinners: be their iniquities never ſo great, and never ſo vile, there is a fountain ſet open, come who will; there was never any ſaved but a rebel, and never any man received to mercy, but he that oppoſed the mercy of God, and his grace in *Chriſt*. The fiery Serpents did ſting the people in the Wilderneſſe, but there was a brazen Serpent to heal them.

Obſerve the folly of this plea: what Scripture ever ſaid that the greatneſſe of mans ſinne could hinder the greatneſſe of GOD's mercy? no Scripture reveals

veals this; we see *David* praieth the contrary, *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *and pardon my sins, for they are great*; nay, *God* himself doth the quite contrary, *Isai.* 43.24,25. *Thou hast made me serve with thy sins, and wearied me with thine iniquities, yet am I he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my Names sake.* When the Jews did tyre GOD with their distempers, and burthened him with their sinfull courses, then the Lord for his owne names sake would not so much as remember their iniquities against them.

Psal. 25.11

Againe observe, that sinnes though they be never so haynous of themselves,

ſelves, yet if the ſoul can ſee them, and the heart be burthened wth them, they are ſo farre from hindering the work of faith, and from making thee uncapable of mercy, that they fit thee to go to *Chriſt*: The truth is, (which I pray you take notice of) it is not properly our unworthineſſe, but our pride and haughtineſſe that hinders us from coming to *Chriſt*; for we would have ſomething in our ſelves, and not have all from *Chriſt*. Take the diſtreſſed ſoul that ſees the vileneſſe of his ſinnes; ſuppoſe thy ſinnes were fewer, nevertheleſſe even then thou goeſt not to *Chriſt*, becauſe thou art per-

perſwaded of the freenes of his grace, but becauſe thou haſt a worthineſſe in thy ſelf, & wouldſt bring ſomething to *Chriſt*, and not receive all from him: Therefore it is thy pride, and thy ſelf-conceitedneſſe that hinders thee, thou muſt have thus much grace and holineſſe, and *Chriſt* muſt not juſtifie the ungodly, but the godly man: I tell thee, then he will never juſtifie a man while the world ſtands.

Object. But the ſoul replyes again, My ſins are worſe, not only becauſe they are many, but becauſe of the mercy & ſalvation that I have rejected, which hath been

been offered me from day to day.

This hinders not; provided that thou canst see those evils of thine: though thou hast cast away the kindenesse of the Lord, yet the Lord wil not cast away thee, if thou wilt come and seek him earnestly again: *For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wroth* (saith God) *and I smote him, I hid my self, and he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* If this could have hindred, *Iudah* should never have received mercy; but the Text saith, I have seen his wayes, and will heal him; *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet turn again to me,*

Answ.

Esay 57. 17, 18.

Jere. 3. 1

me, saith the Lord There is no time past if a man have but a heart to return; there is no limitation of the riches of Gods free grace, except the sin against the holy Ghost, *Rev.* 3.20. *I stand at the door and knock*; though he cry till he be hoarse, and stand till he be weary; yet he stands still: if any adulterous or deceitfull wretch will open, the Lord will come in, and bring comfort, and sup with him.

Object. Oh, that is true, saith the poor soul, had I but a heart to mourn for my baseneſſe; see my sinnes I do, but this is my misery, I cannot be burthened with them; I have a heart that

that cannot break and mourn for dishonouring of God.

This hinders not neither, provided that thy heart is weary of it self, that it cannot be weary of sinne: *The Lord shews mercy, because he will shew mercy*; it is not because thou canst please him, but because mercypleaseth him. When did the Lord shew mercy to *Paul*, even then when *Paul* did expresse most malice against him; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He persecutes *Christ*, and yet *Christ* pities him, and shews him mercy; and so the churlish Jaylor, when he was most opposite against the meās of

Answ.

Mich. 7. 18

Acts.

of grace, the Lord shewed then most compassion upon him; he that before resisted the means of grace, was now brought home by those means.

Object. But woe, saith the poor soul, you are now come to the quick; this very word is like a Milstone about my neck, to sink my soul for ever; for this is the depth of that basenes that lies on me, that all the means do not better me. Why, though *Paul* and the Jaylor were bad enough, yet they were made better by the means; but this is my hopelesse condition, that the means of grace prevail not on me. Is there such a heart in hell as

as I; how ill must I needs be, when all the means in the world will do me no good? but, me thinks, I feel my heart more hard and stubborn under all GODS Ordinances; my condition is certainly hopelesse, when the means that should soften me, do but harden me, and make me worse.

Answ. This is the last plea whereby the devill holds down the heart of a poor sinner; but let me answer thee, this hinders not neither, but that at least thou maist have hope of mercy, therfore observe three passages by way of answer.

1 First, the Word and

means of grace do work good, if it make thee more sensible of thy hardnesse and deadnes: though happily it work not that good, and after the same manner that thou desirest; yet if it make thee see thy baseneſſe and hardneſſe of heart, and dulneſſe, in regard of that body of death which hangs upon thee, then the Word works in the best manner, because it is after Gods manner howsoere not after thine. That Physick works most kindely, that makes the party sick before it works, so it is with the Word: thou hast a proud heart, and liftest up thy self in thine own abilities, and trustest

truſteſt in thine own ſtrength, and thinkeſt that thy care and improvemēt of the means, would work wonders; but now the word works ſweetly, whē it makes thee apprehenſive, that a wounded ſoul is the gift of God, not of man, nor of the means: and therefore the Word makes to thee look to God for it, and to prize it when thou haſt it; and the Word makes thee look to God to continue it: to feel deadneſſe is life, and to feel hardneſſe is ſoftneſſe. Onely remember this one Caution, except there be ſome luſt or diſtemper that thy heart hankers after, for then the

Caution.

Word will harden thee becauſe thou hardneſt thy ſelf.

2 Secondly, (mark this I beſeech you) thou art the cauſe why thy heart is not ſoftned, & why the Word works not upon thy ſoul; the diſtemper of thy own heart hinders the working of the word, and diſpenſation of Gods providence, and the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; thou muſt not thinſt to limit the holy One of Iſrael, for it is a Covenant of Grace; the Lord will not ſtand bent to thy bow, and give thee grace when thou wilt; it is not for us to know the times & ſeaſons. What if the Lord wil not

give

give thee grace this yeer, nor the next, nor all thy life: if at the last gasp he wil drop in a little favor, it is more than he ows thee: therefore hear, to day, and wait to morrow, and continue so doing, because thou knowest not when God may blesse his own Ordinances; and complain not of delayes, but wait, for God hath waited for you long: and therefore if he make you wait for peace of conscience, and assurance of his love, the Lord deals equally with you, and as shall be best for you. God gives what, and when, & how he will, therefore wait for it.

Wait for mercy.

Thirdly, know and con-

Rest not upon duties.

sider, that thou hast rested upon thine own duties and endeavours, and thou dost not go to God, that blesseth both the means and endeavours: the fault is thine own, (I say) because thou restest in thine own performances, and in the power of the means that thou apprehendest; and dost not go to God, that would have wrought more than al these; for did a man depend upon Gods power and mercy in his Ordinances, he should alwayes finde some proportionable succour, as well when he finds no successe, as when he findes any: for God sometimes gives, and sometimes delayes, but Gods

Gods love is as constant whē he gives not, as when he gives. Therefore labor to get out from all carnall confidence in holy duties, and rest not in thy performances, but look beyond all duties to God, and desire him to give thee succesſe above them.

Many a man makes his services, his *Saviours*. He makes them the bottome to bear up his conſcience, the ground wherof is this: happily he finds and feels by woful experiēce, what the fruits of ſinne are. He ſees the venom of his corruptions, and the lamentable effects of all his ſinfull practiſes. He thought it before a fine thing to

swear, and lye, and drink, and follow base cõpany, but now they are gravell to his heart, and gal to his soul. His conscience flyeth in his face, and he is ready to sink down to hel. *Conscience* saith, these be thy sinnes, and these will be thy damnation; they have been thy delight, but they wil prove thy shame and confusion in the end, thou shalt shortly find the smart of them. To hell, away be packing.

Now this man hath no cure for his conscieẽce, but this, he entreats *Conscience* to be quiet; he confesseth he hath lived in base courses, and his condition is very miserable, but

but now he will reform all: he hath neglected *prayer* heretofore, but now he will pray: he hath hated GODS servants, but now he will love them: his wayes have been exceeding evill, but now he will reform them: he begins to turn a new leaf now, and thinks that will serve the turn. Thus many poor souls use *the means* as *Mediators*, and so fall short of Christ. A gracious heart doth not onely *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive*, and use all possible means to obtain Christ, but he is restlesse and unsatisfied til he enjoy and possesse Christ in the means: He rests not upon the bare perfor-

mance of any duty, neither thinks by vertue of any of his endeavours, to obtain a part in Christ.

I will expresse this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Usurer that is sick of some disease, tell him such a Physitian can cure him, but he stands upon state, he will not come without a great deal of charge: Charge, (saith he) I do not stand upon that; I have money enough by me, *that* will fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the soul sees, the guilt of sinne is not removed, and *Conscience* is still snarling, and the *Law*

condemning him, and Christ is the onely Saviour, that can satisfie and cure all. But how shall Christ be procured? Why his *prayer*, and *fasting*, and *performances* wil command him, by the power and merit of the work done, though he hath no *promise* for it, and so by resting on his own performances, fals short of Christ and salvation.

Oh, saith a poor sinner, I would go out of my self, and I see I rest upon my duties, but I cannot get out of my self. *Object.*

I answer, it is Sathans subtilty to keep us in our selves here too, by endeavouring to make us go out *Answ.*

out of our selves by our own strength; and this is a marvellous depth of malice and cunning in the devill, when he makes us believe, (and we out of ignorance are deluded) that we have power in our own hand to go out of our selves; no, it is a supernaturall work, and the same hand must bring us out of our selves, that must bring us to Christ. This is in truth *self-denyall*, when the soul knoweth it hath nothing, and therefore is over-poured with the mighty hand of God, and the work of his Spirit; so that the poor sinner doth not so much as expect any power or ability in himself,

Self-denyall, what it is.

ſelf, or from the creature, in the doing of any duty; he knows he is dead, and therfore cannot help himſelf, much leſſe can the creature do him good; and therefore he looks to heaven, and ſeeks all ſufficiency from God alone. For (obſerve it) whiles that I thus think with my ſelf, that I have ability to go out of my ſelf, I do not then ſay, that I have a principle within me to deny my ſelf, which is quite contrary; for to deny a mans ſelf, is to know that he hath no power in himſelf to do any ſpirituall duty: therefore we muſt look onely to the voyce of Chriſt, and know, that

he

he that calls us from the wayes of darkneſſe, and from our ſelves, muſt alſo bring us to Chriſt; therefore expect power from Chriſt to pluck thee out of thy ſelf, and to make the beleeve; for the ſame hand doth work both.

I would not have a poor creature think thus with himſelf, If this means, and theſe Ordinances will do me no good, and will not work upon my heart, I ſhall never have it; but ſpeak thus unto God, and ſay, In truth Lord I expect no power from my ſelf, nor from the meanes, but my reſolution is, to looke up to him that hath hid his face from

from *Iacob*, I will not look inward here for power, to receive it from within my ſelf, nor to the Miniſter, nor to the means, but I wil wait upon thee Lord, and look up to thy power to work by the means. *Who is amongſt you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his ſervants, that walketh in darkneſſe, and hath no light of comfort? let him truſt in the Name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.* When all other things in the world fail, let the ſoul then look up to the Lord, & look out from it ſelf; this is the fitteſt time of all to meet with God; I would have a Chriſtiá chuſe this time above all

Eſa 50.10.

all times to meet his Saviour in, and this is the onely time to disappoint Sathan: for, as I said before it is the last refuge that the devill hath, and if he misse this opportunity, he is for ever conquered. Thus the sinner partly seeing the beauty of grace, will not, and partly seeing the baseneſſe of his own heart, dares not come to Christ.

Object. Then in the next place, it is want of sense & feeling, which he would have and cannot finde; therefore the distressed soul saith, Alas, I never knew what it was to have the assurance of Gods love, I never received any evi-

dence

dence of Gods favour, and shall I think that I have faith? they that beleeve have their hearts filled with joy unspeakable and glorious; the Word reveals this: but I am a stranger to that joy, how can I then think that I have any work of faith wrought in me?

Answ. I answer, this doth not hinder either that thou hast not faith, or that thou hast not come to God by beleeving, therefore remember these three particulars.

1. First, thou must not think to have *joy* and refreshing before thou go to the promise, but thou must look for it, when thou dost

doſt chew and feed upon the promiſe: thou wouldſt have the Lord to give thee all the bargain before thou make the match. This *joy* is a fruit that proceeds frō *faith* after much wreſtling; it doth not follow from faith at the firſt; firſt beleeve, and then joy; the heart is never filled with joy before beleeving; but afterwards when thou haſt had the ſweet dew of the comfort of the promiſe many a day, then look for this joy.

2 Secondly, know that theſe joyes, and this ſenſe and feeling may be abſent from faith: a man may have a good faith, and yet want the reliſh and ſweetneſſe

nes which he longs after. A man may want his desirings, and yet want neither life nor heat: A tree may want leaves & fruit, and yet want neither sap nor moysture: A mans faith may be somewhat strong, when his feeling is nothing at all. *David* was justified & sanctified, and yet wanted this joy; and so *Iob* rested upon GOD when he had but little feeling, as when he saith, *Thou makest me a Butt to shoot at, yet will I trust in thee, though thou kill me.* Iob. 3. 15. Therefore build not your comfort upon sense and feeling, but go to the promise.

Thirdly, the Saints of 3

God

God many times are deprived of comfort, not because God with-holds it, but because they put it from themselves, and will not have it, though he offer it: as *David*, *My soul refused comfort*, like a sullen child that will not eat his Milk, because he hath it not in the golden dish; so because God doth not for you what you would, you will have nothing at all. These are the main hinderances: I might adde many more, for carnall reason is very fruitful this way, and we through our own folly, and the devils subtilty, are apt to abuse things, and make them hinderances in our way to

Psal. 77.

eternal happineſſe. I come now to the cures of al our impedimẽ s; for if we had the wiſdome and care we ſhould have, we might break thorow them all, and come to Chriſt. The means are eſpecially four, whereby we may be inwardly fortified againſt them, and at laſt be able to overcome them.

Helps to come to Chriſt.

The firſt cure and help is this, we muſt not look too long, nor pore too much, or unwarrantably upon our own corruptiõs, ſo farre as to be feared or diſheartned from coming to the riches of Gods grace; for this is an everlaſting truth, that whatſoevor ſight of ſin unfits a man for

for mercy, when he may take it, and it is offered to him; that sight of sin is ever sinfull, though it have never so fair a pretence of sorrow and deep humiliation: as we think many times, Had I a soul so thorowly humbled, and bruised, and so forth. The devill oft keeps us in sin by poring upon our sins; when we think hereby to be carried from our sins, that course thus is a sinful course. Tel not me of sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation, all that sorrow and humiliation is nought that keeps a man from receiving mercy, when it is offered: see this in *Abraham*, he had this pro-

True godly sorrow, what it is.

promiſe, that he ſhould have a ſon in his old age; *He being not weak in faith, regard d not his old age, or deadneſſe, nor the barrenneſſe of Sarahs womb, but beleeved in him who had promiſed it,* & there he reſts and ſtayes; he ſaw his body was dead, yet there was a living promiſe; and what though *Sarahs* womb was barren, yet the promiſe was fruitfull; he knew his own deadneſſe and her barrenneſſe, but he conſidered them not: ſo we muſt ſee our ſinnes, and conſider our many weakneſſes, but never ſo ſettle our ſelves with, or cõſider of them ſo as to be hindered from coming to *God* for Rom. 4. 19.

for mercy, which he freely offers us, and we ſtand in need of; for while the ſoul of a man is dayly plodding upon his own miſery and diſtempers, theſe two things follow.

1. Firſt, we ſtop the ſtream of Gods promiſe, and let down the ſluce againſt it, ſo that the promiſe cannot come into our ſouls.

2 And ſecondly, we ſet open the ſtream and floodgate of corruption, and make it to run moſt violently in upon us, and in the end to overwhelme us, and the inconvenience ariſing hereby, will ſlay the beſt Chriſtian in the world, for what can a man get

get out of his corruption? he can have no more thereof than is there to be had; it is in vain to look for cõfort where it is not to be had, it may dishearten us, but never encourage us.—See the humility and wisedome of the woman of *Canaan*, she follows Christ, but he listens not to her, but gives her the repulse, and cals her *dogge*, and saith, You *Gentiles* are *dogges*: and the Gospel of grace and salvation is the *Childrens bread*. Now if she had onely considered the words of Christ, and only looked into her own baseneſſe, she had never come to receive mercy and comfort. Mat. 15. 27

but she saith, Truth Lord, I am as a *dog*, yet the *dogs eat of the crummes that fall from their Masters Table*. There are two things here which do expresse the frame of a gracious heart that is truely wise, to attend to its own baseneſſe, her *humility* and *wisedome*; as if she had said, Thou saist I am a *Gentile*, and a *Dogge*, I confesse it; yet though I am a Dog, I will not go out of the doors, but lie under the table for mercy; so we must and ought, when our corruptions come in upon us, and we see our selves damned creatures, let us then say, In truth, Lord, I am as bad as thy word can speak: yet

let

let us not flye away from mercy, but lie at the feet of our Saviour.

It is fit, and we ought to see our sinnes, but stay not too long here; see thy sinnes thou must, but not be setled thereon, so as to be kept from Christ; that sight of sinne which doth not drive a man to Christ for mercy, is ever sinfull. Labour therefore to see thy sinnes, thus:

How to see sinne aright.

First, see thy sinnes till thou see them odious and loathsome.

Secondly, till thou see an utter insufficiency in thy self to satisfie for them.

Thirdly, till thou hast seen an absolute necessity

of Christ to succour thee; and then away speedily to the Throne of grace, and dwell no longer on thy sinnes, for *there* is pardon enough to remove the guilt that sin hath brought upon thy soul, *there* is power enough to make thee master thy corruptions. Indeed every soul should say thus, It is true Lord, my sinnes are many and great, for I have departed frō thee the fountain of blisse: But shall I go on yet further from thee, and persist in evill? God forbid. Al this while I speak to broken-hearted Christians. You prophane ones, you have your portion already, and shal have more

more afterwards, therfore a while ſtand you by, and let the Children come to their ſhare.

Eſa 66.2. Opened.

The Lord looks to him that is of an humble and contrite heart, and that trembles before him. A poor creature cannot but obſerve every word, and tremble at every truth. Here is ſalvation indeed (ſaith he) but it is not mine, here is mercy, but I have no part in it; and ſo he ſhakes at the apprehenſion, concluding certainly I ſhall never enjoy it. Now mark what the Text ſaith, *The Lord looks at ſuch a trembling ſoul*, that is, he caſts ſweet intimations of his goodneſſe and kindeneſſe

upon him, and faith, Thou poor trembling sinner, to thee be it spoken, I have an eye towards thee in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Esa. 40. 2. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,* (saith the Lord) *speak comfortably to Ierusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned: tell Ierusalem she is accepted, tell her what my minde is.* So the LORD saith to his Ministers, Speak to the heart of such an humbled penitent sinner, tell him from *Me*, tell him from Heaven, tell him from the Lord Jesus Christ, tell him from under the hand of the *Spirit*, his person is accepted, and his sinnes are done

done away, and he shal be looked upon in mercy.

Ephraim is the picture of a soul truely humbled, in whom we may see the behaviour of a true penitent towards GOD, and GODS dealing towards him. The text saith, *Surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself* (there's the heart broken and thirsting) *thou hast chastised me, and I waas chastised, turn thou to me, and I shall be turned; thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* As if the sinner Ier. 31. 18, 19, 20.

should say, I am the wretch that have seen all the means of grace in abundant measure, and yet never profited under the same. The Lord hath corrected me but I would not be tamed; He hath instructed me, but I would not learn. Lord turn me, Thou art my God, I have nothing in my self, Nay, now I see the evils which before I never perceived; And I observe the baseneſſe of my course now, wch before I never considered; And I am ashamed of my abuse of grace revealed, and I am confounded in the sense of those abominatiõs which my foul hath harboured.

This

This is the mourning of a poor ſinner: Now mark Gods anſwer: *Ephraim is my Sonne, he is a pleaſant Childe, for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will ſure have mercy upon him.* As who ſhould ſay, I obſerved all thoſe ſecret ſighes, I conſidered all thoſe tears, I heard all thoſe prayers, and took notice of all thoſe complaints, and my bowels earn towards this poor ſinner, that ſeeks to me for mercy. And the truth is, I wil embrace him with my loving kindeneſſe.

Now the ſecond means of cure is this, take heed 2 Help.

of judging thy estate by carnal reason without the rule, as thus it is the fashion of poor distressed spirits, to passe fearfull sentence uponthemselves upon groundlesse argumēts, and to say, I never found it, I feel no such thing, and I fear it is not so. Thus we hear those carnall pleas which Satan helps us to invent, and we judge our selves by them: Now, I say, take heed of this, and make conscience of this same, as of any other sin of swearing, stealing, whoring, or murther; for this is as truely a sin as those, though not so great; nay, it is a far greater sin than you imagine. Consider this

The danger of judging our selves rashly.

this you humble-hearted Christians, for to you I speak; for when upon these grounds thou concludest thy case and estate is naught, see against how many Commandements thou sinnest. First, thou dishonourest God and the work of his grace; in denying that which GOD hath done for thee, and speakst *unreverently* against God; thou art a *murtherer*, and woundest thy own soul; thou robbest thy self of comfort, and art a *thief*; and thou *bearest false witnesse* against thine own heart, yea against Christ and his Spirit, and the work of grace vvrought in thee, and joynest vvith the

the devil against the Lord Christ.

But thou wilt say, I speak as I think. That hinders not, but that thou beareſt falſe witneſſe; as we ſee, if a man affirm ſuch a one is a drunkard, and knows it not, this man bears falſe witneſſe, becauſe though the man be a drunkard, yet he knows it not: ſo thou ſayeſt thou haſt nothing, when as thou doſt onely fear it, and ſuſpect it, and the like: I ſpeak this the rather becauſe of the ſinfull diſtemper that creeps in upon the hearts of many broken-hearted Chriſtians, that out of a ſelf-willed rode of carnal reaſon,

ſon, and a vile haunt that they have got, their hearts are perſwaded that they do well to do ſo, and they are never wel except they do thus.

But ſuch as theſe (mark it) when reaſon is plain, and the Scriptures are evi dently againſt them, they do not ſo much attend what the Miniſter ſaith, but they ſtand and invent how they may anſwer the Miniſter, and ſo put away their own comforts. Let the fear of God fall upon every ſoul that hears this, and know, that how-ſoever you have taken leave to your ſelves, and have take up pleas againſt the truth, yet now go your

your vvayes, and mourn for it, & vvonder that the Lord hath not tāken away all the comfort of his grace, and all the motions of his *Spirit* from you. The
Ps 119.37. Prophet *David* prayes the Lord to *turn away his eyes from beholding vanity*: novv if God must do that, then much more must he turn away your hearts from attending to vanities: I must attend to God, and the voyce of his *Spirit*, but to liften to those carnall pleas which I have no warrant to do, I sinne deeply, and hurt my own soul dangerously thereby. No man would deal with a cheater; carnall reason is a cheater, therefore

fore let us not attend ther-
to, unlesse we resolve to
be cozened; and if the
danger of the sin cannot
make us do this, then let
the sorrow that wil come
by it, constrain us: *Behold,* Esa. 50. 11.
all you that kindle a fire,
and that compasse your selves
about with the sparkles
that ye have kindled, this
shall you have at my hand,
you shall lie down in sorrow.
I will shew what is meant
by *sparkles*, and vvhat by
fire; in the old Lavv you
know there was heavenly
fire continually in the San-
ctuary, that shadowed out
to us the wil and wisdome
of God in his Word: but
there was also strãge fire,
that is, there were divers
spar-

ſparkles of their *own* imaginations, and conceits; every poor creature carries his tinder-box about him, and he is ever kindling of it; which the Lord doth not allow of: In that text are two things: firſt, that the heart of man will naturally invent carnall reaſons and pleas againſt it ſelf, and be ſetled upon them: Secondly, the iſſue that follows thereon, This ſhall ye have of mine hand, you ſhall lie down in your own ſorrow. When the Scriptures are clear, and reaſons are evident, and yet you will have your own devices, thus much I tell you, you ſhall lie down in ſorrow

at

at last, and you may thank your selves for it; away with your tinder-boxes therfore abase your selves before the Throne of grace, and be at length wise to salvation.

Ho, every one that thirsteth (saith God by his Prophet) *come and buy without money, take of the Well of the Water of life, and live for ever freely.* Many a poor Minister would fain leave his commodity behinde him, and saith, You must have it, and you shall have it; it is your portion, and belongs of right unto you; we are even fain to force GODS favours upon the soul. We beseech you to beleeve, and we intreat you

you for the Lord Jesus sake to receive mercy, and humble your hearts.

But will any man take these favours?

No beloved, many sweet promises, and many admirable precious things of grace and salvation are revealed, but men neither passe, nor care to receive benefit by them. Some carnal plea or other evades all. This argues plainly your smal estimaon of Christ. A poor hungry sinner that is apprehensive of his own weaknesse and feeblenes, longs till the *feast-day* cometh, that he may partake of these delicates: Oh how carefully wil he listen, and how

how diligently wil he attend what the Minister saith; and if the Word comes home to his conscience inlightning his heart and reproving him of his secret corruption, he cries out, I am in great trouble, good Lord comfort me: I am full of doubts, good Lord resolve me: I am ignorant in spirituall things, good Lord teach me: I have a proud, stout, stubborn heart, good *Lord* humble me. Take this for a generall rule, A good heart is alwayes at best ease, when the Word works most. But a wicked graceless person is then best, when the Word works least upon him. There-

Therfore when he thinks the Minister will come close to his soul, he will not be at home that day, he wil be sure to be out of Town, he knows the word would awaken him, and affright him, and he cannot bear the blow, therefore he keeps away, and shuns the hearing of Gods word, which would work upon him.

3 Help. But thirdly, let us be marvellously wary and watchfull that we enter not into the lists of dispute with Satan, upon those points wch are beyond the reach of man; as thus to say, I am not elected, therefore GOD will not do me good, it is vain

vain for me to use the means; my time of mercy is gone, oh the day of grace that I have seen, the Lord knocked sweetly, and was pleased to reveal my sinnes at such a time; but then hard-hearted wretch that I was, I shut the door of my heart against the LORD Jesus Christ, and now it is gone and past, now there is no hope for ever of receiving mercy again; If the devil get thee here, all thy comfort is gone, for upon this ground a man shall never receive rest to his heart while the world stands; for if no man can ever know the thing, how shall I be able to give, or any

any man to take comfort: Look as it is with a poor travelling man that lighteth among theeves, who come and promise to cary him a neerer way, and at last they bring him into a wood where no passẽgers come, and there they do what they will with him: so it is with a poor soul, when the devill gets him into these secret disputes of Gods eternall counsel, there are no passengers come this way, therefore thou art void of succour, and Satan may exercise his pleasure in terrifying thy poor soul. Therefore for your directiõ in this case, observe three rules.

1. First, let the soul in this case

case stay it self upon the Al-mightines of the power of God, *I am God All-Sufficient*: if thou art perswaded of the All-sufficiency of God, this will help thee: God can do more than thou canst think he is able, and will do thee good, though thou know it not; and therefore observe thus much, the soul never doubts of Gods wil, but it doubts of his power also in some measure. Gen. 17. 1.

2 Secondly, check thine own heart for medling with Gods secrets, and prying into his hidden counsels; let no man go beyond his bounds: it appertains not to thee to dive

dive into the mystery. *Secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us*; and *Who hath known the minde of God?* saith *Paul*. Mark this, you that wil be going up into the skies to know what GOD's secret minde is, keep your stations wisely, for the devil and all the devils in hell never knew the minde of the Lord. When *Ionas* cried against *Niniveh*, saying, within forty daies all you drunkards and adulterers shall be destroyed: Mark there how the King staies himself, saying, Who can tell if the Lord wil repent and stay his fierce wrath that we perish not? When the devill tels thee thus, and

Deut. 29. 29.

1 Cor 1. 2,16.

Ion. 4. 19.

and faith, God hath appointed a way to salvation, and you have had the means, and did not profit by them, therefore God will never shew you mercy, nor give you grace: how can the Devill tell that? nay, all the devils in hell cannot tell; let me walk in that course which God hath appointed and commanded, and do that which I ought, and let me say, who knows but God may break the heart of a proud rebellious sinner? none but God knows it.

Thirdly, measure not the riches of Gods love, and the sweetnesse of his grace, according to your own conceits, and do not

think that because you cannot conceive it, therefore God will not do it: *Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*, saith the Prophet; that is, All you wicked ones, and you that have lived lewdly, return from your wicked wayes, and from your vain imaginations, for he will abundantly pardon.

Esa. 55 7, 8, 9.

Object. But will the Lord pardon all my sins? saith the soul, I cannot think it; if I were a God, I should never passe by such intolerable things.

Answ. And because you cannot, you think God cannot: Yes, saith the Lord, I can abundantly pardon;

for

for my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my wayes as your wayes. A poor creature thinks his sinnes are unpardonable, and he shal never get assurance of Gods love; You are *men*, saith the Lord, and have finite thoughts, but I am God, and have mercy infinitly, when you think I have no mercy.

But there were never any such received to mercy, saith the soul, and therefore why should I be the man? *Object.*

When CHRIST had wrought many strange miracles, the people said, there were never any such things done in Israel; and therefore it is plain, God *Answ.*

can do things that never were done the like: *He doth great things past finding out, and wondrous without number,* saith *Iob:* therefore judge not Gods power and love by what thou canst conceive. Iob.9.10.

The best Christians are most suspicious of themselvs, and none fuller of doubts and fears than those that have least cause to fear their estates are bad. Sathan makes it his chief work to grieve and terrifie these. And their own distrustfull hearts are alwayes raising false surmises, and putting mercy from them, as if they were hired by the devill to take his part in pleading against

againſt themſelves. Therfore it is worth our obſerving what *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 42. *The Lord ſhall command his loving kindneſſe in the morning.* It is a phraſe taken from *Princes* & great cõmanders, whoſe words are a law: So God wil ſend forth his loving kindneſſe to a truely humbled Chriſtiyn with a *Command.* As if he ſhould ſay, Go *love* and *everlaſting mercy*, take thy cõmiſſion, & I charge thee go to that poor broken-hearted ſinner, go to that poor hungry, and thirſty ſoul; go and proſper, and prevail, and ſettle my love upon his heart, whether he will or no. Thus the Lord charges Pſa. 42. 18

his loving kindnesse to do good to poor sinners, and by his own Almightinesse stayeth the soul, when it is ready to sink under the burthen of its trangressions.

Object. What, shall I have mercy? No, No, (saith the doubting heart.) Will the Lord Jesus accept me? No surely. Could I pray so, and had I these parts, and could I perform duties after this and this manner, then there were some hope, but alas, there is no mercy for me.

Answ. Let me tell thee, who ever thou art, God invites thee in particular; and all the sweetnesse in Christ, & his precious promises, apper-

appertain to thy ſoul, and thou haſt as great an intereſt in them, as any ſervant of God in the world whatſoever.

No, no, ſaith the trembling ſoul, I cannot beleeve it; ſuch a wretch as I go to heaven? it cannot be; Heaven ſhall rather fall, than I come there. Thus the diſcouraged ſinner knocks off mercy, and ſhuts the door againſt himſelf. *Object.*

Now when all carnall reaſonings, and high imaginations, (as *Paul* calls them) have raiſed up ſtrong holds againſt mercy and comfort; when the Word cannot for the preſent ſettle peace in the

ſoul, God is fain at laſt to *command* loving kindeneſſe, and ſend him with a Commiſſion from heaven ſaying, I charge you break open the door of the heart of ſuch a ſinner, rend that vayl of ignorance that is before his eyes, ſilence all his doubts and fears; And I charge you go home to that ſoul and cheer it, refreſh it with the ſenſe of my favor, and fil it with the aſſurance of my love.

Rom. 5.18. *Whileſt we were enimies*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Chriſt died for us*. The Lord ſends from heaven to a poor miſerable creature, Commend my love, commend my mercy to ſuch a diſtreſſed

ſtreſſed ſoul, and tell him though he hath been an enimy to me, yet I am a friend to him. Tell him though he hath been a Traytor to me, I have been a good King to him. He hath been a rebell to me, but tell him I have been a loving God to him. Tell him his ſinnes are pardoned, his perſon accepted, and his ſoul ſhal be ſaved. Tell him his ſighes and groans are heard, and his praiers obſerved in heaven; let him know that the Lord Jeſus died for ſinners when they were ſinners. Make this good to his ſoul I charge you before you come back

Therefore the fourth

Help. cure is his, and it is ſpecially to be obſerved above all in thy proceeding with thy ſelf in judgement; that is, paſſe no ſentence againſt thy ſoul, but according to the evidence of the word: if thou art to be approved, let the Word of God approve thee, & let his word examine thee, if thou art to be examined; if the Word ſpeak for thee, it is no matter though al men and Angels ſpeak againſt thee; and if the Word condemn thee, it is no matter who ſpeaks for thee: what though ſome wrangling rayler ſtep in, and will be determining the cauſes before the Judge comes; yet

a wiſe man will ſtay till the Judge comes, and wait his leiſure? Deal thou ſo with thine own ſoul, put not the caſe to be tried by a company of peeviſh carnall reaſõs, but ſtay til the word come, and judge thy ſelf by that, and hold to that for ever. *The light is that which manifeſteth all things*; the meaning is this, the light of the Word and the evidences of Gods truth manifeſted to the ſouls of Gods people; all ſenſe & feeling of carnall reaſoning, are like fogges and miſts, which make a man that he cãnot ſee the way; but bring him to the light, & then his ſtate and condition will be manifeſted. Eph. 5. 13.

Mat. 11 21

fested what it is. *Learn of me,* (saith our Saviour) *and you shall finde rest to your souls:* And the Psalmist saith, *I will enquire what the Lord will say:* so say thou, I wil not hearken what carnall reason will say. The want of this is the cause why we have so many distractions, and disquietments and are stil in doubtings, because he that teacheth us is a deluder.

For the poor soul saith, What, shal I have an interest in Christ, shall I have title to the promises? nay, this belongs to those that are broken-hearted: indeed if I had such power against corruption, such heavenly mindenesse, and

and this and that, there were ſome hopes, but I am ſo full of weakneſſe, and manytimes led captive by my rebellious heart; that it is too apparant I never had ſaving grace, nay, I fear I never ſhall have it truly wrought in my ſoul.

But who told you ſo, and where learned you this Religion? I am ſure you never learned it of Chriſt. Who, or what word tels you, If I have ſuch corruptions, I ſhall never have grace? not the word of Chriſt, I am ſure, wherefore I charge you, hold to the truth of the word; Learn of *me*, ſaith Chriſt, and put not your cauſe to be decided by car-

carnall reason, nor harken what it telleth you; for if you take that course, you shal never come to Christ whilst the world stands. Learn of the Lord Christ, for his Word is faithfull, and his promise sure, and there you shall finde rest as strong as Mount-Sion; it is that Word whereby thou shalt be judg'd at the great day, when sense and feeling shal be cast out for wranglers, & never come into Court. Thus much of the four cures; I will now propound four rules how a man may order himself aright in this course, so that he may repair to the Word at all times, as he ought to do;

and

and gain evidence there, for establishing his heart to peace and tranquillity.

Rules to direct a Christian how to use the Word of God for the evidence of his assurance. Rule 1.

First, to use the Word of God aright as thou must in all conditions that concern thy soul, repair to the Word, so thou must consider thine own uprightnes, and what work of grace is in thy soul, that wil answer the Word and testifie that the work of grace is true: be sure to take thy soul at the best; do not alwayes consider what is the worst part in thee,

thee, nor thy failings that may accuse thee only, but if there be any uprightnesse that may speak for thee, hear that also; it is injustice for any Court to hear one side and not another: the Lord doth not lie at catch with his children, but he takes them at the best: as *Rom.* 4.22. it is said that *Abraham beleeved the promise, and it was imputed to him for righteousnesse*; yet in the 12 of *Gen.* we see he had some doubtings, but God took him at the best, and so records this of his faith. So we see that *Sarah* is spoken of as a gracious woman, and a pattern for women in calling her Husband Lord,

1 Pet. 3.6. Gen. 8.12

which

which was a ſigne of an humble heart; but yet we reade that ſhe derided the meſſage of the Lord by the Angel; yet notwithſtanding the Lord buries that, and onely mentions the other in the commendationsof her. Now asthe Lord deals with his ſervants, ſo muſt we deal with our ſelves; whatſoever is found ſincere and upright, obſerve that as well as the other, nay rather before the other. If a man ſhould have his cauſe handled in any Court after this faſhion, and they ſhould onely obſerve the failings in this cauſe, the beſt cauſe mayhappily go againſt a man, therefore the

the Court will hear all read; as if any Bond or Bill come in, or any matter of agreemcnt, they wil hear all: if a man have an Indenture, and the Lawyer onely open, and reads the failings in it, and that which seems to make against any party, if the Judge onely hear that, it must needs go against him, and therefore the man saith, Good my Lord hear all: and when they finde it written that such a debt is paid, and the party satisfied, then the cause goes well; whereas if they had heard onely the first part, and not the second, he had lost all: So, many bring in great inditemēts against

againſt themſelves, and ſay; Oh what pride and ſtubbornneſſe is in my heart? Oh how weak am I, and dull, and dead, and backward to holy duties? how careleſſe of enjoying communion with God? How negligent in ſifting and trying my own heart, in watching over my ſenſes, and mourning in ſecret for my daily failings? It is true, but art thou not troubled with theſe, and is it not the greateſt grief of thy ſoul that lyes upon thee? yea, ſaith the poor ſoul, I confeſſe my heart is weary of theſe, and I could be content to be any thing, that I could not be thus: now take thy

ſoul

ſoul on this ſide, and hear the beſt part: as it is with a mans hand and the ſtaffe, I compare the promiſe to a ſtaffe: you know the back of a mans hand cannot take hold of the ſtaffe, but let him turn the palm of his hand to the ſtaffe, and then he can take it: ſo turn thou the right ſide of thy ſoul to the promiſe, and then thou maiſt take it; but we turn the back ſide of our hearts to the promiſe, when the ſoul ſaith, Oh my ſtubbornneſſe is great, and mine inabilities and corruptions are many; this is the wrong ſide of thine heart, and this will ever hinder thee fr[illegible] taking hold

hold of the promise; but thy soul hates these, and is weary of them; this is the right side of the heart, turn that to the promise.

Secondly labor to have thy conscience setled and established in that truth which now out of the Word thou hast gotten, to bear witnesse of the work of grace in thee; for if there be any want of the assurance of Gods love, and if the evidence of the work of grace come not powerfully in upon thy heart, but there is some guilt of sinne still remaining, then conscience will breed new broyls, and continually nip and disquiet *Rule 2.*

quiet the heart; therefore as we must have our judgement informed by the Word, that there is some good in us, so we must get conscience perswaded of it, that conscience may speak for us: as the debter if he be indebted to many creditors, he must agree with all, for if he agree with all save one, that *one* may imprison him as well as all the rest: So it is with the poor distressed soul that lies at the mercy of the Lord, and is so deep in Arerages, that he cannot help himself, he must labour to still conscience, that it do not accuse him, but be on his side.

The

The want of this is the cauſe why new ſutes and new bills are daily put up againſt us, onely becauſe conſcience is not pacified: take a poor ſinner that hath all his doubts & objections anſwer'd; come to him, and ſay, Are all theſe all your doubts and objections? yes: and are they all anſwered? yes: and have you now any thing to ſay againſt that which hath been made known unto you? no not now: Say to him again: Did your conſcience ſay to you, It is a ſin to ſay you have no grace? Now here he demurres and ſtayes, and ſaith, No, I dare not ſay ſo, but I rather ſay the con-

contrary. Mark this, all the books are croſt, and all objections anſwered, and yet conſcience puts in a new plea, becauſe it was not ſatisfied.

Now come to him again, and ſay, You are ſometimes captived by ſinne, but you are willing to be at Gods diſpoſing, and that he ſhould pluck away all theſe corruptions, are you not?

Oh, ſaith the poor ſinner, I muſt needs yeeld to that; then I affirm to thy ſoul, this is a work of true grace: therefore let conſcience be fully ſatisfied, and cancel all ſelf-accuſations; this will clear the heart, and caſt out all cavils

vills that come in againſt us: *For if our conſciences condemn us not, then we have boldneſſe towards God:* we muſt mark conſciẽce, and be convinced, that it is a ſin to ſay, God hath not wrought this work of grace in our hearts: for though ſenſe and feeling be ſometimes gone, yet cõſcience remembers the day and year when he had a clear evidence of Gods love; & ſaith, Lord thou knoweſt it, and thou didſt ſay out of thy Word at ſuch a time that my heart was upright and ſincere in thy ſight.

It ſhould be with a poor ſinner, as it is with a wiſe man when he would

make his Lands sure unto him and his posterity by evidences and writings; he is not content onely to have his evidences in his own keeping, but will have them enrolled in Chancery, such a yeer, and such a day, that if he should lose his deeds, he may be sure to finde them again there: so it should be with a distressed soul, we should not onely be content to have our objections answered, but get them recorded in the Court of *Conscience*, that when sense and feeling is lost, yet we may readily go to the Court of *Conscience*, and there finde the day and year when Gods

love

love was made sure to us.

Thirdly, we should strive mightily to have our harts over-poured with the evidence which reason and conscience makes good to us, that so we may quietly receive it, and calmly welcome it, and yeeld and subject our hearts to the truth. But here we all stick, for there are three things in the soul of a man which maintain these quarrels and oppositions against the evidence of the Word. 1. Reason objects: 2. Conscience accuseth: 3. The Will of man will not submit: and we finde it in experience, that when a man hath stilled conscience, and answe-

Rule 3.

red all reasons, yet the stubbornesse of the heart maintains a gain-saying against the truth, and keeps the old quarrell that hath been answered long ago, and that a man would think had bin buried long since. It is in this case with a poor sinner as it is with a man that hath a contentious adversary; happily the cause that they two have in hand hath been tryed in all the Courts of *England* and at last comes to *Chancery*, and there it is concluded against him, so that all things are setled and ended, as a man would think, and an honest man would sit down and be quiet;

quiet: but the other being a quarrelsome fellow wil not yeeld yet, but to the old law he will again, and he will sel all he hath but he will have his will; till at the last the Judge comes to take notice of this man, and casts out the cause, and puts him in prison, and saith, These things were all answered, & the cause ended long ago.

Just so for all the world is it with the heart of a gracious man that is humbled in some measure, and could be content to yeeld to the credit of Gods Word, and to the witnesse of his conscience, & saith, My condition it better than I thought it was,

but there is an old proud ſelf-willed heart that will not be quiet, but ſtill is quarrelſome, and maintains the old quarrell; Though reaſons are all confuted, and conſcience bears witneſſe againſt him, and every Miniſter caſts out the cauſe; yet obſerve it, a poor diſtreſſed ſinner will keep the old objections, & though they were anſwered the night before, yet he will have them freſh the next morning, and the next moneth, even when a man would think he ſhould not dare to come in Court; and the miſchief lies even here, in a proud ſelf-willed heart that will not yeeld.

yeeld. Therefore labour to get thy heart ſo farre over-poured with the authority of the truth, whatſoever it is that God reveals to thee for thy good, and do not reject the evidence which God makes known, and paſſeth upon thy ſoul for thy everlaſting wel-fare, do not (I ſay) reject it: and becauſe thou haſt not that comfort that thou wouldeſt, therefore thou wilt have none at all; it is not properly becauſe thou canſt not, but becauſe thou wilt not receive the promiſe, that ſo wracks and torments thy ſpirit: this is it which breeds the quarrell: and hence it is

that when reason is satisfied, and conscience convinced, ask the soul this question and say, are you perswaded that the Lord hath done you good, and will shew everlasting mercy to your soul? no (saith he) all the world shal not perswade me to that; Ministers are mercifull, and Christians are charitable, & are loath to discourage me, as I should do to them; but did they know me indeed, they would never think thus of me, certainly I shall never finde it so: What, I grace? all the world shal never perswade me to it; Mark what I say, this is meerly thy pride and self willdnesse

neſſe that will not receive that good which God is willing to give thee, this helliſh and devilliſh pride of thine will coſt thee dear one day.

But, wil ſome ſay, How is it pride? we are ever complaining and condemning our ſelves; this cannot be pride. *Object.*

Yes, I ſay it is abominable pride againſt the Majeſty of heaven, and that I will ſhew thee two wayes: Firſt, for a man to follow his own conceits and ſelf-willdnes againſt the truth, and the force of reaſon, and the witneſſe of the ſervants of God and his own conſcience, is not this pride? *Anſw.*

Secondly, thy pride appears in this, namely, because thou hast not what thou wouldest, and in that manner and measure thou desirest, and hast not that sweetnesse of grace and conquest over corruption that thou wouldest have, therefore thou flingest away all Gods kindenesse; this is infinite pride: That measure of mercy which God hath already shewed thy soul is incomprehensible, and yet because you cannot have what you would, you will have nothing at all. As a man that hath the Law on his side, and his estate setled on him, yet because his evidences are not written in great

great huge letters, and in large paper, he throws them all away: so you have no grace, because you have not so much as you would have; you have no humility, because you have not so much humility: O pride, pride, in the highest degree!

Labour therefore to bring thy heart to this blessed subjection to the truth of God, and make it thy duty as well to receive comfort when God offers it upon good grounds, as to do a duty commanded; and know that it is a sinne to reject mercy when God offers it, as to kill a man which God hath forbid-

den

den; and therefore you Saints of God that have been pestred thus, and have been enemies to your selves, when your hearts begin to slide away thus, take your hearts, and reason thus with your souls, & say, Good Lord, this is the proud stubborn distemper of this vile heart of mine; what would I have? is not Gods Word clear, and my conscience satisfied? do not the Ministers of God affirm my state to be good? And shall I thus dishonour God?

Object. But what saith the poor soul again, Must I eat mine own words, and say I have grace, when before

I

I ſaid I had none?

Anſw. Yes, and be thankfull to God that thou maiſt ſay ſo too; it is better for you to croſſe your own humours, than croſſe Gods Spirit: take notice of it, and fear for ever, leſt that proud and ſtubborn ſoul of thine, which now refuſeth conſolation when God offers it, be forced to eat thy fleſh, and come upon thy knees, and never get comfort to thy dying day; and though God ſave thee in the end, yet thou ſhalt be as it were in hell upon earth.

One would have thoght it had been humility in *Peter* to refuſe to let *Chriſt waſh his feet*, but it was nothing

thing but pride, and therefore Christ takes him up for it sharply, (wch is indeed the only way to cure this distemper) *If I wash*
Ioh. 13. 8 9 *thee not, thou hast no part in me:* if you will needs have your own humours, and wil not be perswaded, you may get you down to hell with them: *Peter* paused with himself a while, but at last when his stomack came down, then, *Lord, not only my feet, but my hand, and heart and all.* It is humility of heart to take what God offers. Most Christians think they are humble-hearted, but they are so farre proud, as they give leave to this distemper: therefore labour to over-

master

master this gain-saying heart of thine, with the authority of the Word of God, and learn to receive mercy when God offers it, lest he take away the comfort of his Spirit frō you, and make you go howling and roaring to your graves. Though he bring you heaven in the end, yet you may have a hell before you come thither.

The last Rule is this, Maintain the good Word which thy heart hath submitted to, and keep it as the best treasure under heaven; and when thou hast obtainest certain evidence that thy estate is good, hear nothing against it, but stick fast to the

Rule 4.

the same, regard nothing but out of the word of God, against that comfort and evidence of thy salvation, which thou hast bin perswaded of by the word; if Sathan or carnall reason have any thing to say against thee, let them bring Scripture, and then yield to it; but without the word hear nothing. Look as it is with a mā that is at law for lāds, if he have his adversary on the hip, and have gotten some advantage against him, he will keep him there, and hold him to the point. If a man will follow every wrangling Lawyer at every impertinent out straying, he will never have any good

suc-

ſucceſſe; it is the faſhion of many Attornies, rather to breed quarrels, than to end them; and therefore hold to the main point. Deal with Satan as with a ſubtill adverſary that is ful of wiles and fetches. It is the cunning of the enimy to lead you out, and he will have many vagaries; but be ſure to hold to that truth wth you have received frō the evidence of the Word, and the witnes of conſcience. When a man hath gotten ſōme comfort, then the devill begins to play the lawyer in this manner:

How the ſoul, being tempted, may anſwer Satans accuſation.

Doſt

Satan. Dost thou not see how weak and poor thou art? how destitute of al saving grace, and how contrary thou walkest to God?

Sinner. It is true (saith the soul) I am laden with infirmities, yet it is as true that he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall have mercy.

Satan. But (saith the devil) dost thou not see that thou art full of pride, and weakness, and secretly unwilling to come to duties?

Sinner. It is true (saith the soul) I am so, this vile heart of mine is backward to all good, and many unruly lusts bear sway in me, yet I hate and detest this, and therefore shall finde mercy; the Word saith so.

But

But (saith the devil) are you of Gods counsell? secret things belong to God. *Satan.*

Indeed (saith the soul) I know not what Gods secret wil is, yet this I know, that the Word saith, He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner but invites such dayly to come unto him. *Sinner.*

But (saith the devil) many cozen themselves, mercy is a great thing, and few obtain it, and why may not you be cozened as well as others? *Satan.*

But (saith the soul) the Lord will not cozen me, who alone knows my heart, & the word knows what the Lord knows; on that I relie. *Sinner.*

But

Satan. But (saith the devil) may not you be deceiv'd in the word? the word is true indeed, but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the word & your heart do sute together?

Sinner. Why (saith the soul) I desire as earnestly to have my sinne purged, as I do to have it pardoned; I know my heart by the Word, that is the touchstone of my life, therefore to the Word I repair; the Lord knows that I hate all sin inwardly, & reform it outwardly, & therefore I know I shall finde mercy: shew me a place of Scripture that saith I do not rightly apply the Word, & I wil beleeve it;

but

but I wil not believe thee, for thou art a deluder, and a lyar. Thus hold to the Word, and the devill will be tired, and go away; keep you here, for if he catch you a wandring after sense and feeling, you are gone. *Thou through* thy Cõmandements *hast made me wiser than mine enimies*, saith *David*, *for* they *are ever with me*. Satan is wise; and the flesh, and carnall reason, and the world, are wise; but blessed be our God that makes every poor ignorant servant of his wiser than al these; but how? the Word must be ever with them; you must keep the Word with you daily, and that will make you Ps. 119 98

you not know only what is amisse, but get ground against whatsoever hinders your peace.

Satan deals in this with the soul, as the enimy deals in warre; when *Ioshua* defeated the men of *Ai*, he got them out of the City, and then they that lay in ambush went and took it in, and burnt it with fire: so the devill doth: Our Castle or City is the promises, and the Word, and Ordinances of God; now if the devil can but get you out of this Castle, he hath you where he would; if you will look after every bird that flies, and listen after every carnall reason and temptation,

Iosh 8.9.

on, you are gone; if he once get you from the promiſe, he will intangle you in his ſnare, and overcome you.

Little children, if ye abide in Gods Commandements, ye abide in God, ſaith the Apoſtle: As if he had ſaid, Children, your enimies are many, and great, & cunning, therfore keep home, keep home, come not abroad, and then you ſhall be ſafe, whatſoever troubles ariſe. It is the faſhion of parents, if their children run abroad and catch a knock, they tell them that they are well enough ſerved, you might have kept home when you had warning. 1Ioh.2.28.

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The issue of this point is this, Judge thy soul by the Word, and look upon thy sacred part, and let that bear witnesse for thee; and what the Word of God doth evidence to thee, that maintain and hear nothing against it; this is the way to receive constant comfort, and go on merrily in our Christian course: let quarrels, troubles, and temptations come, yet keep you within doors, and rest your selves vpon the riches of Gods free grace in Jesus Christ, and be for ever comforted, and you may go singing to Heaven, and to your graves, though you meet with never so many

Means to obtain an interest in the Promise.

Now I will shew you some Means whereby a man may so improve his time, that at last he may obtain this blessed estate; which are four: but before I begin with them, you must be advertised of thus much, that we may use the means, but there is no means under heaven *alone* will do it, yet you must wait upon God in the use of the means, for it is not the means that will work faith, but the Spirit of God in the use of the means; and therefore the Text saith,

To you it is given to beleeve, for faith is the free gift of God; it is God that must do it, and yet he will not do it without us, because we are reasonable men and women. The Lord affords us means, and therefore we are to wait upon him in the use of those means; let the Lord do what he will, and let us do what we should: we must not think when we have the means, then we can get faith presently; for, as *Paul* saith, *The same power that raised up Iesus from the dead, must make us able to beleeve*, or else all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Ministers on earth, and all the help that men

Eph. 1. 20.

and

and means can do thee, will do thee no good: the means are divers, as hearing and prayer, which are the Conduits whereby God communicates faith; but I let those passe and onely fasten upon those which are needfull for feeble *Christians* to bring them unto this blessed state, and those are these.

First, we must, as much as in us lies, labour to pluck away al those props that the soul leans upon, and all those outward succours, and whatsoever outward contentment it is, which a poor sinner doth repair and betake himself to for relief and help, that when all these Means 1.

are taken from us, we may be forced to go for succour there where it is to be had. It is that which remains in the nature of man, and that which is natural to us al, even from our first Parents, that we would have the staffe in our own hands, and support our own souls, and supply all those necessities that lie upon us.

Now the way to make the soule leane upon *Christ*, is, to pluck away all other props; for the last thing that we come to, is the promise, and if we could find good any where else, we would never go to *Christ*; God hears last of us, and there-

fore

fore we ſhould do with our ſelves as the enimy doth with a City beſieged; when he would make them yeeld, the only way is to famiſh them, cut off all proviſion, and ſtop all paſſages that none may come to relieve them, and then they will be forced to yeeld themſelves to the mercy of the enimy; ſo it is with our nature, we are ſtill truſting to our own ſtrength, and relying upon ſomething of our own; therfore famiſh thy heart, and cut off all the means and comfort whereby thy heart may be ſuccoured, and thy conſcience quieted, and when thy heart is famiſhed, it will then

ſeek to a Saviour, and lie there, becauſe there is no other thing to ſupport it.

The poor woman in the Goſpel had ſpent all her goods upon the Phyſitians, and if ſhe had had but a little means left, yea, but one farthing token, for any thing I know ſhe would never have gone to Chriſt; but when all theſe failed, then ſhe was forced to ſeek to *Chriſt*, that was ready and willing to do any thing for her diſtreſſed nature: ſo our ſouls muſt have ſomething to ſupport themſelves upon, for they cannot live without ſome ſupport. Now therefore when

when all our carnal hopes are taken away, we must needs stay upon the promise, because we have nothing else. It is not required that a man should cast away those outward comforts that God affords him; but onely this, that though you have all, yet labour to get your heart to see and acknowledge the emptines of all these, & let not the heart seek too much content in them; for these are all but lying vanities, and broken staves, which will not only cozen a man, but pierce him too.

Now when the soul seeth these things cannot succour him, but lay him

in the dust, then he wil be content to have his heart severed from them. It is with the soul as it was with *Noahs Dove*, when the *Ark* began to rest upon the Mountain of *Ararat*, *Noah* sent out the *Dove*, but the *Dove found no rest for the sole of her foot*: No question there were many dead carkases, but the *dove* found no rest till she came to the Ark again; so when a man findes no rest in any thing the creature affords, and can get no footing for the soul to stay it self upon them, then it betakes it self to *Christ*, and goes home to the promise, and rests there, and expects from thence

thence what is needfull; as in the art of ſwimming, he that will ſwim muſt pluck his feet from the bottome, and commit himſelf to the ſtream to bear him up; ſo we muſt pluck our hearts from theſe things & them from us; and though we have honour and preferments, yet we muſt not put any confidence in them, but learn by our beleeving, to commit our ſelves wholly to the power of the promiſe, and receive comfort from thence onely.

Let not the gods of this world, *honour*, and *profit*, and *pleaſure* deceive thee; did the pride of *Pharaons*

heart deliver him? did the riches of *Dives* save him? did *Herods* applause that he had, deliver him? did these gods secure them? nay, have they not left them in the lurch? therefore let us take our hearts off from these things, and have a base esteem of them and see a vanity and emptinesse, and insufficiency in them, that we may be forced to seek to Christ, and say as *David* said, *Help, Lord, for vain is the help of man.* Labour therefore to see the privy pranks of thy own heart, and hunt out all those mazes and turnings and windings of thy spirit; for it is wonderful to see how the

the soul is ready to hang her comforts upon every hedge, and shift and shark in every by-corner for comfort: Now when thou seest thy heart thus seeking to settle it self, pluck away that prop, and see the emptinesse of it, and then thy heart will be fit and ready to go unto Christ.

Means 2. Now when this is done, there is a little way made that the promise may come to the soul; therfore labor in the secõd place to have your hearts possessed thorowly, and perswaded effectually of the fulnesse of that good vvhich is in the promise, & of that satisfactory mercy and free-

nesse

neſſe of the grace of God in *Chriſt*, that ſo the ſoul may be eſtabliſhed with that full content which is to be had in the riches of the promiſe. But mark what I ſay, perſwade your heart of it, and content not your ſelves that you are able to diſpute ſomewhat fully of the excellency of the promiſe, and of the riches of Gods free grace; What is this to the purpoſe that the heart knovvs this, & yet is fore-ſtalled that it comes not to the promiſe? therefore leave not thy heart till it come to make that account of the promiſe, that the Word ſaith it is worth: I ſay, leave not thy

heart

heart till thou ſee the promiſe of grace moſt beautiful in thy eye, and that thy heart may gain ſome earneſt touching the goodneſſe of God, & the riches of his grace towards thee; and bring thy heart to know and ſee, that the promiſe is better than all the riches & honors that thou canſt have, or the world can beſtow: *They that* know thee, *will truſt in thee, for thou Lord haſt never failed them that ſeek thee:* This kinde of knowledge ever breeds confidence and reſolution, and perſwades the heart; We dare truſt a friend whoſe faithfulneſſe we have tryed, and reſt upon that which Pſal. 9. 10.

which we know by experience. The promises are of a tried truth; seek from one end of the heavens to the other, turn all the Bible over, and see if ever any man leaned on the promise, and the Lord did not perform that which he had promised for the good of his soul? *Except the Lord had been my delight, I should have perished in my troubles* (saith *David.*) *My flesh faileth, and my heart also; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* Here lies a great weight, and it is a work of marvellous difficulty, and great necessity; and therfore that thy hart may sit down satisfied in the

Ps. 119. 92

Psa 72. 26.

the sufficiency of the promise, I will propound three rules how you may improve the promise for your uttermost benefit.

How to improve the promises of our benefit.

First, labour dayly to present to thy soul a greater good in the promise than thou canst see any where else: It is a mans skill, and it should be his endeavour dayly to dog his heart, and to look what it is that the heart desires most, and present a greater good to thy soul therein, than in all things thou canst have elsewhere. We should deal with our hearts as a man would do with a corrupt Justice, when he would have him to be on his side.

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the onely way is to bribe him; (though that is sinful) yet it is good to bribe the corrupt heart with the goodnes of the promise, that the heart may cleave to it, and long after it. Do honours, or riches, or the applause of men, or any earthly pleasures offer thee content and satisfaction? then perswade thy heart there is a greater worth and excellency in the promise than can be had in all the world. Here is *an exceeding weight of glory*, he that hath this promise shall be made a *King*, and shall have glory that will *never vanish*: doth thy heart hanker after earthly joy and mirth? thou shalt

finde

find a greater mirth in the promise, than in the cracking of these thorns; (and so I may say of any thing else) Doth thy heart hanker ofter riches? then tell thy heart that there are *Vnsearchable riches in Christ*, and through him we have title to all the promises of this life and a better; we know he that offers most for the bargain, hath it; therefore we should observe the goings out of our hearts, & what offers it self to give us most content, and present our souls with a greater good in God, than in all things else.

Oh the height, and depth, and length and breadth of the

love

love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

The consideration of this, as it works a longing after *Christ*, and the promises, so it should fill our faces with shame and confusiō, that ever we should set light by such riches of mercy, and walk unworthy of so great salvation. Could we comprehend the unmeasurable dimensions of Gods love and goodnesse revealed in his Word, how would our hearts be enflamed towards him? When the sinner thinks thus with himself: I that have done all that I could against so good a God, that my heart even bleeds to think of it,

it, there was no name under Heaven that I tore in pieces, but Gods name, his *wounds*, and *life*, and *heart blood*, I have rent and torn a thousand times. Nay, there was no command in the world that my soul so much despised, as the cõmand of the Lord Jesus. There was no spirit that ever spake to me, which I so much resisted as the Spirit of the Lord. O how many sweet motions hath the Lord let into my soul, thereby to pluck me from my base courses & sinful practises! by how many mercies hath he allured me? by how many gracious promises hath he invited me to forsake

sake my sinnes, and turn unto him? But I have flown in the face of his *Ministers*, and *blessed Spirit*, and rejected all terms of reconciliation. If I had layn in a dungeon, and been plagued with torments all my life time; yea, though I had another world ful of misery to live in, I should count it infinite mercy, so the Lord would passe by my sinfull miscarriages, and pardon these inward rebellions.

But that GOD should send his deareſt Sonne to love me, and that so incomparably, so inconceivably, that I could not possibly hate him, so much as he loves & affects me,

I

I could not ſo exceed in unkindneſſe towards him, as he hath exceeded in tender compaſſiō towards me? Were it not righteous with God, never to ſpeak comfort more to my ſoul, that have ſo lightly eſteemed his promiſe & word of comfort? Had it not been juſt with God to take advantage againſt me? Was it not juſt that I which lived in ſinne, ſhould have periſhed in my ſinne? Had it not been juſt that I who have ſo much loved corruption, ſhould have reaped the bitter fruit of it long ere this? But that the Lord ſhould finde an enimy, and not ſlay him; nay, that

that he should give his beloved *Son* out of his bosome to save him, is love not to be expressed. Oh the *heigth* of his mercy, beyond my desire! Oh the *bredth* of this mercy without all bounds! Oh the *length* of this mercy beyond all times! Oh the *depth* of this mercy beyond all sin and misery!

Labour therefore to have accesse to the promise with thy soul, and speak a good word for it, and say, Stand by profits and pleasures, and preferments, room for the Lord *Iesus Christ*, and put a wonderful price upon the promise; this is an everlasting rule, whatsoever the

the ſoul doth account as beſt, that it will chuſe and leave all others for it. I would have the ſoul out-bid the world, and labour to out-ſhoot thee devil in his own Bow, and thoſe things which the devill caſts in thy way, for hindering thy ſoul from coming to the promiſe, let thoſe things be as means to uſher in the promiſe. As thus, when thou ſeeſt thy heart look after friends, let thoſe friends uſher the way to think on the infinite love and favour of GOD in *Chriſt*; and when thy hart would fain hunt after wealth, let this uſher a way to the promiſe, and ſay, If the heart

heart find such content in riches, what would it find in the riches of Gods grace in *Christ?* thus present a greater good in the promise, than in any thing else.

2. The second rule is, labour to convince thy heart of this, that all the things in the world without the promise are not good, and hadst thou all that the earth can afford without a promise, they were rather a curse to thee than a blessing. *Faith is* Heb. 11.1. *the substance of things hoped for*, it goes a kinde of being and substance to all; there is no substance in honour and riches if they be not in faith; they are clogs

clogs and snares to a man, except faith give a title thereunto, and a blessing therewith; all our prayers have no substance in them, but are poor and empty words without faith in the promise, to have what we pay for: the most broken and mean prayer, when a poor creature can scarce utter four words with any sense, yet if it be mingled with *faith*, is a very powerfull prayer; and the substance of all your hearing, and my preaching lies in *faith*, otherwise they are but lost labor, for *faith* is it that gives a kind of being to whatsoever we speak or do.

The third Rule in this

second means is this, Labour to acquaint thy heart with the goodnesse of the promise, before carnall reason comes & possesses thy heart, how that the promise is most sure, and will come when it is most seasonable, and is best for thee, and when God sees it most fit we shal certainly have it; Heb. 4.16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of grace, that we may receive comfort and mercy in time of need*; not when I see it fit, but when God sees fit; this is it which carries away many poor sinfull hearts from resting upon the promise of God, sometimes the heart is a little affected with the excellency

lency of the riches of *Gods* grace, & seeth what great things the Lord hath done for his soul, and saith, Oh that I were such a one, and let me dy the death of the righteous ! but when it comes to passe that he hath not present ease and comfort, then he casts away the good promise of the Lord, and the devill prevails wonderfully with these poor creatures : Therefore saith the Prophet, *When the fig-tree shall not blossome, neither shall the fruit be on the Vines, when the labour of the Olive shall fail, and yeeld no fruit, then will I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation,* saith the Prophet, Hab. 3. 17.

cōfort from the promiſe, and from the Lord Jeſus *Chriſt* is then reaſonable, when I have moſt need, & may receive moſt good thereby; then ſhall I be ſure to have the promiſe ſo to ſurprize my heart, that it may be poſſeſſed with the all-ſufficiency of it.

Means 3. In the third place ſee that thou expecteſt all the good which thou needeſt and canſt deſire, from that ſufficiency of the promiſe; do not think to bring any good with thee to the promiſe, but go to the promiſe for all good; *there* are all the cords of mercy that muſt draw thee, and *there* is the all-ſufficiency that

that can ſupply all thy wants, look for all from thence, and expect power from the promiſe to enable thee to do whatſoever thou wouldſt, & to make thee able to beleeve the promiſe.

It is a weak plea for a man to ſay, I dare not look to the promiſe, I cannot beleeve; if I could, then I might expect ſome good. *Object.*

Thou ſhalt never beleeve upon theſe tearms, thou muſt not firſt have faith, and then go to the promiſe, but thou muſt firſt go to the promiſe, and from thence receive power to make thee able to beleeve the promiſe, *Anſw.*

Ps. 119.47 *O Lord remember thy Word to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust.* When men are enlarged in love to a man, and make fair promises, this perswades the heart to trust to them, and to rely upon them for good; therefore a man doth use to say, I durst not have thought it, nor expected, if you had not promised it; so the promise of God made to the soul, makes the soul to rest upon it.

To expect faith without a promise, is all one as if a man should expect a crop without seed; for the promise is the immortall seed of Gods Word, whereby the *Spirit* breeds this faith

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in the hearts of all that are his. *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voyce of the Sonne of God, and they that hear it shall live*: It is spoken of raising of a dead man from the grave of sin. First, there is the voice of Christ to the soul, before there can be an Echo again of the soul to Christ; so the power of the promise must come to the soul, and we must hear the voyce of God in the promise, before we can return an Echo again to the Lord: the Lord saith, *Come to me*, and the soul saith, *I come, Lord*. When thou seest much deadnesse and unfitnesse of heart, do not thou Ioh. 5. 25.

thou go away, and look off from the promise, and say, Thus I am, and so it is with me; but rather go to the promise, & say, whatsoever frailties I finde in my self, yet I will look to the Lord, and to his promise; for if I want faith, the promise must settle me more and more therein, I must not bring faith to the promise, but receive faith from thence, and therefore I will wait till the Lord please to work it.

Means 4. Lastly, labour to yeeld to the equall condition of the promise, and make no more conditiõs than God makes; now the promise requires no more of a man but

but that he ſhould come and lay hold on mercy; therefore do thou require no more than God in the promiſe requires; there is enough in the promiſe to do thee good, therfore expect all good from it, and be content to go to the promiſe, and take of God whatſoever he hath therein offered. *Buy without money*; This is the condition that God offers mercy upon, buy wine and Milk, that is, grace and ſalvation; without mony, that is, without ſufficiency of your own: if a man ſhould go running up and down to borrow money before he come to buy, he may famiſh before he Eſay 55. 1.

come; so the Lord offers *Christs* mercy and salvation, and faith, Come, take it without money, and we runne up and down to borrow money of *prayer*, and *duties*, and *power against corruption*, but you may be starved before you buy, if you go this way to work.

Therefore make Gods cōmodities no dearer than God himself makes them; for this is the cause why many a poor soul is kept from coming to the promise: Oh, saith one, If I were able to master my sinnes and distempers, as such a one can do, then I would beleeve; this is to bring money; but art thou content to have Christ, and

and that *Christ* may have thee, and rule thee, and ſupply thy wants, and reveal thy ſinnes, and heal thy corruptions; then go to the promiſe, & the Lord thereby will ſupply thy wants, and maſter all thy ſinnes and corruptions; but that muſt come afterwards; *When I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee in thy blood* (ſaith the Lord) *and behold the time was as the time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſſe; yea, I entred into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine*; (that is, you were content that God ſhould marry you in all your ragges) *and I waſhed thee with water, yea,* Ezek. 16. 8. 9.

I thorowly washed away thy blood from thee, and annointed thee with Oyl, I cloathed thee also with broidered work. First, he marries the Church to Himself, and then he gives grace, and passeth over his estate to his Spouse. Were it not a wonderfull great folly, if some great King should make love to a poor Milkmaid, and she should put it off, and refuse the match till she were a Queen, whereas, if she will match with the King, he will make her a Queen afterwards? So we must not look for sanctification, till we come to the Lord in vocation; for this is all the Lord requires of thee,

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to ſee thy ſinnes, and be weary of them, and be content that the Lord Jeſus ſhall reveal what is amiſſe, and take it away, and that the Lord ſhould give thee grace, then the Lord will bring thee to himſelf, and thou ſhalt receive mercy from him, and then all thy corruptions ſhall fall to the ground. To ſum up the point briefly thus:

Firſt, when we have pluckt away all carnall props, there is way made for the promiſe to come to us.

Secõdly, when our harts are poſſeſſed thorowly of the ſufficiency of Gods promiſe and grace, then the

the promise draws neer to the soul.

Thirdly, when we expect al from the promise, even power to come to the promise, then the promise layes hold upon us.

Fourthly, when we are content to yeeld to the equall conditions of the promise, then the promise carries us quite away.

Thus we have seen the hindrances removed, and the means propounded: and now that we may be moved & perswaded importunately to seek after this blessed grace of God, let us consider thus much; if you once get this grace, you get all other graces with it; it is a ground of com-

comfort to ſet a man a work, when in the doing of one work he may do another, nay, all works; ſo it is in the work of faith; it ſhould encourage us to labour for *faith*, becauſe if we get this, we get all: men that are wiſe to provide for themſelves, & to lay out their money in a purchaſe for the beſt advantage, if they ſee it well wooded & watered, eſpecially if there be ſome golden Mynes, all their mind will be upon that, becauſe if they have that, they have all with it; ſo it is here, get grace, and get al; ſtrengthen this, and all is ſtrong; want this, & want all; once get this, and you need

Faith to be laboured for above all graces.

need not to seek for wisedome, for *faith* will make you wise to salvation, and you need not labour for patience, for faith will make you patient, & faith will bring holinesse with it to purge you, for faith brings all grace. Now the Saints of God endeavour with much pains to get grace, and to subdue their corruptions; but yet they are feeble and weak therin, becaus they take not the right way.

Many a poor soul mourns and cries to heaven for mercy; and prayes against a stubborn hard heart; and he is weary of his life, becaus his vile heart remains, and yet happily

happily never gets little or any redreſs; & the main wound lies here. Alas, you go the wrong way, for if you would have grace, you muſt firſt of all get faith, and that will bring all the reſt; buy the field, and the Pearl is yours; you muſt not ſtand ſtrugling & ſtriving with your own hearts, and think to maſter a proud heart, that will not do it; but let faith go to Chriſt, and there is meeknes, patience, humility and wiſedome, and faith will fetch all theſe to the ſoul. Brethren, if you ſet ſuch a price upon any of theſe graces, then labour for faith, get that, and you ſhall

shall have all; the Apostle saith, *We all with open face beholding, as in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from glory to glory.* The Lord *Christ* is the glasse, and the glorious grace of God in *Christ* is compared to the glory of the Lord; therefore first we must behold the grace in *Christ* by faith, before we can receive grace; first, see humility in *Christ*, and then fetch it there; first, see strength and courage to enable thy weak heart, and then fetch it. Would not you be content to have a meek, gracious and humble heart? I dare undertake for many of you that

1 Cor 3. 18.

that you had rather have it, than any thing under heaven, and you would think it the beſt bargain that ever you made; and you ſay, Oh that I could once ſee that day, that this proud heart of mine might be humbled. If I could ſee the blood of my ſins, I ſhould think my ſelf happy, and deſire to live no longer; then get faith, and ſo buy the whole, for they go all together; you muſt not think to have patience & meekneſſe without faith, but buy faith, and you ſhall have all together: Would you have the glory of God, & be more heavenly minded, then look to it, get

get it by the eye of faith, and look up to the glory of God in the face of Je-Chriſt, and then you ſhall ſee it; but hold you there then, and this wil increaſe all your graces, to your everlaſting peace & comfort. When men uſe to make a purchaſe, they wil reckon up all, and ſay, There is ſo much wood, worth ſo much, & ſo much ſtock, worth ſo much, and when they offer for the whole, anſwerable to all the parcels: ſo there is *Item* for a heavenly mind, that is worth thouſands, and *Item* for an humble heart, that is worth millions. And are theſe graces worth ſo much? what is

faith

faith worth then? O precious faith! it wil bring all graces with it, one degree of grace after another; grace here, and happineſſe for ever hereafter. If we have any hearts of men, (I do not ſay of *Chriſtians*) me thinkes this ſhould provoke us to to labour for this bleſſed grace of God.

FINIS.